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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 004016

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: DARFUR "TANTAMOUNT TO
GENOCIDE"

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 3897 (B) BRUSSELS 3989

1. (U) Summary. In a resolution dated September 16, the European Parliament (EP) endorsed the U.S. view that events currently happening in Darfur are "tantamount to genocide." A multi-party fact-finding mission undertaken September 2 - 7 provided the impetus for the strong statement. The Dutch Presidency, in addressing the EP, also had tough words for the Sudanese Government -- including the threat of sanctions -- but shied away from the genocide label. Both Presidency and Parliament urged increased and expedited spending to alleviate human suffering in the region. End Summary.

Parliament: Clear on Genocide

2. (U) On September 16, the European Parliament adopted a strong resolution which condemns the Government of Sudan for its deliberate support in Darfur of the targeting of civilians in both villages of origin and centers for displaced people. The EP urged Sudanese authorities "to end impunity and to bring to justice immediately the planners and perpetrators of crimes against humanity, war crimes and human rights violations, which can be construed as tantamount to genocide." The resolution also called for the UNSC to consider a global arms embargo and other targeted sanctions -- and possibly the use of the International Criminal Court -- against perpetrators.

3. (U) The tone for the parliamentary debate was set by fifteen minutes of dramatic images, as well as personal accounts from several Members of the European Parliament (MEP) who visited Sudan and Chad at the beginning of September. The group of MEPs was led by the chairwoman of the Development Committee, Luisa Morgantini (Italian Communist), who spoke with alarm about spectacle of extreme suffering in the camps for displaced people. UK Socialist Glenys Kinnock said, "What we saw convinced us that we were witnessing a genocide." Czech Conservative MEP noted, "The Sudanese Government is not disposed to do any more than the international community forces it to do." The EP is the first Parliament in the EU to agree with the U.S. that acts of genocide are taking place in Darfur. Parliamentarians voted overwhelmingly in favor of the resolution 566 to 6 (and 16 abstentions).

4. (U) The wording of the resolution and the MEP statements stand in contrast to the more cautious approach taken in the Council Conclusions adopted September 13 (reftel a). The Council conclusions "welcome steps by the UNSG to establish as soon as possible an international commission of inquiry in order to immediately investigate all violations of human rights and humanitarian law in Darfur, and to determine whether acts of genocide have occurred."

5. (U) The EP resolution (full text emailed to the Department) also states:
-- Darfur has suffered from persistent underdevelopment and economic and political marginalization;
-- fighting, including attacks on civilians and indiscriminate bombing, has resulted in at least 30,000 killings;
-- the Government of Eritrea is arming and training the SLA and JEM;
-- after the ceasefire was signed on April 8, the GoS continued to support militias which kill civilians, use sexual violence against women, loot and harass, and that it has breached the ceasefire by using rocket helicopters and fighter jets;
-- all the refugees the delegation met in Chad were from non-Arab tribes who mistrust the Sudanese authorities and are afraid to return as long as their security is not guaranteed;
-- the establishment of "safe areas" is questionable;
-- the substantial number of additional ceasefire observers (not protection forces) are needed, as well as human rights monitors;
-- Article 48 of Sudan's criminal law should be repealed to ensure that women who have been raped are able to receive treatment before or upon reporting the incident and that

police should be training in sexual and gender-based violence issues; and,
-- the agreement between UNHCR and the Government of Chad to deploy policemen around the refugee camps to ensure their security is a positive step.

Dutch Presidency: International Cooperation, Assistance
Needed

16. (U) In his speech to the EP on September 14, Council President Bernard Bot referred to the Sudanese Government's inability, or possibly unwillingness, to stop the violence in Darfur. Like the EP resolution, Bot highlighted the active role of the African Union in the Sudan crisis while mentioning the need to cooperate closely with other international players such as the UN, the U.S. and the Arab League.

17. (U) He outlined the following components of the Dutch Presidency's plan of action for Sudan:

-- Support the mission of the UN SRSR Pronk: The EU supports the Action Plan, but sees resolution 1556 as the main framework to maintain pressure on the GoS. Bot said that there is recent evidence of continued killings of villages in Darfur by armed forces. He called for a new, strong UNSC resolution and said that "the threat of sanctions is the best means of pressure," noting that the U.S. and EU are in agreement on this issue.

-- Pressure the GoS and SPLM to conclude the Naivasha peace process and to conclude the Abuja peace process with the SLM and JEM: Bot highlighted the benefits that peace in Sudan could bring not only to Sudanese, but to the region and other parts of Africa.

-- Enhance Humanitarian Assistance: While highlighting improvements in terms of access, Bot said that the humanitarian situation is still critical. The lack of security is the biggest threat to the people of Darfur. He said that while the EU has pledged a total of 287.8 million euros (of which 107 million come from the EC and the balance from Member States), 50 percent of the UN appeal for Darfur remains unmet. At the EP hearing, Development and Humanitarian Commissioner Poul Nielson called on Member States to increase their funding for humanitarian relief efforts; the EC has contributed 47% of the EU total (whereas their target for any crisis is 20% of the total). The EP resolution also stressed the need for rapid disbursement of these funds.

Comment

18. (SBU) As one European Commission official who participated in the EP fact-finding mission put it -- the value-added of the MEPs is that they can say what many others are thinking, but cannot express publicly. From the overwhelming support the EP resolution received from MEPs, the Darfur issue reaches across the political and public spectrum in Europe as much as it does in the U.S. From a transatlantic point of view, Darfur also provides an excellent example of cooperation and common thinking (reftel b).

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

SCHNABEL